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CASTLE - SPECTRE

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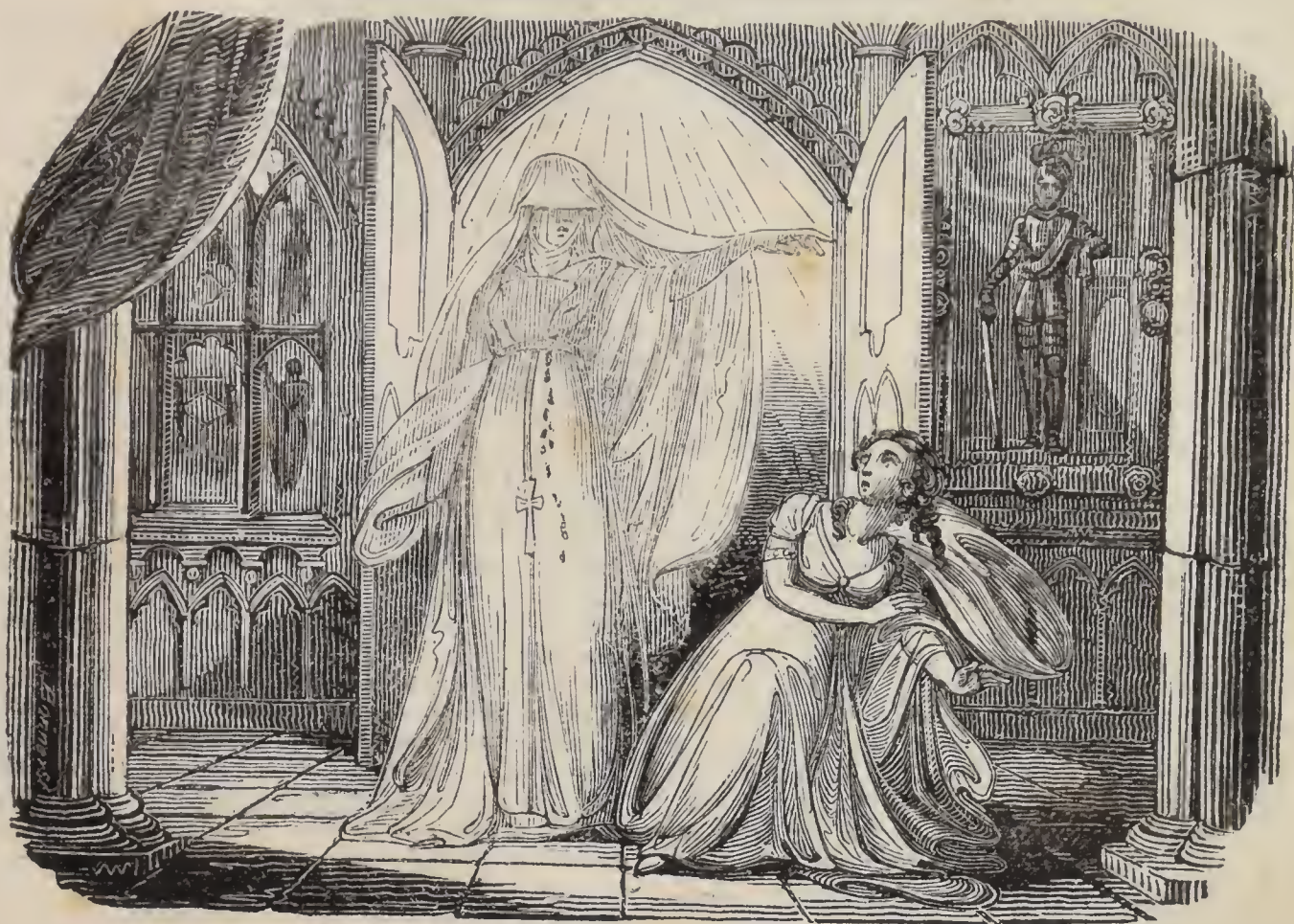
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THE CASTLE SPECTRE;

A DRAMATIC ROMANCE IN FIVE ACTS.—BY M. G. LEWIS.



Act IV.—Scene 2.

CHARACTERS.

OSMOND
REGINALD
PERCY
FATHER PHILIP

MOTLEY
KENRIC
SAIB
HASSAN

MULEY
ALARIC
ALLAN
EDRIC

HAROLD
ANGELA
ALICE
EVELINA

ACT I.—SCENE I. A Grove.

Enter FATHER PHILIP and MOTLEY through a gate.

F. Phil. Never tell me. I repeat it, you are a fellow of a very scandalous course of life. But what principally offends me is, that you pervert the minds of the maids, and keep kissing and smuggling all the pretty girls you meet. Oh! fie! fie!

Mot. I kiss and smuggle them? St. Francis forbid! Lord love you, Father, 'tis they who kiss and smuggle me. I protest I do what I can to preserve my modesty; and I wish that Archbishop Dunstan had heard the lecture upon chastity which I read last night to the dairy-maid in the dark; he'd have been quite edified. But yet what does talking signify? The eloquence of my lips is counteracted by the lustre of my eyes; and really, the little devils are so tender, and so troublesome, that I'm half angry with nature for having made me so very bewitching.

F. Phil. Nonsense! nonsense!

Mot. Put yourself in my place. Suppose that a sweet, smiling rogue, just sixteen, with rosy cheeks, sparkling eyes, pouting lips, &c.—

F. Phil. Oh! fie! fie! fie! To hear such licentious discourse brings the tears into my eyes!

Mot. I believe you, Father; for I see the water is running over at your mouth; which puts me in mind, my good Father, that there are some little points which might be altered in you still better than in myself: such as intemperance, gluttony—

F. Phil. Gluttony! Oh! abominable falsehood!

Mot. Plain matter of fact! Why, will any man pretend to say that you came honestly by that enormous belly, that tremendous tomb of fish,

flesh, and fowl? And, for incontinence, you must allow yourself, that you are unequalled.

F. Phil. I!—I!—

Mot. You; you. May I ask what was your business in the beech-grove, the other evening, when I caught you with buxom Margery, the miller's pretty wife? Was it quite necessary to lay your heads together so close?

F. Phil. Perfectly necessary: I was whispering in her ear wholesome advice, and she took it as kindly as I gave it.

Mot. So you was, faith! Father; you gave it with your lips, and she took it with her's. Well done, Father Philip!

F. Phil. Son, son, you give your tongue too great a license.

Mot. Nay, Father, be not angry: fools, you know, are privileged persons.

F. Phil. I know they are very useless ones; and, in short, master Motley, to be plain with you, of all fools I think you the worst; and for fools of all kinds I've an insuperable aversion.

Mot. Really! Then you have one good quality at least, and I cannot but admire such a total want of self-love! (*Bell rings.*) But, hark! there goes the dinner-bell. Away to table, Father. Depend upon't, the servants will rather eat *part* of their dinner unblessed, than stay 'till your stomach comes, like Jonas's whale, and swallows up the *whole*.

F. Phil. Well, well, fool; I am going; but first let me explain to you that my bulk proceeds from no indulgence of voracious appetite. No, son, no. Little sustenance do I take; but St. Cuthbert's blessing is upon me, and that little prospers with

me most marvelously. Verily, the saint has given me rather too plentiful an increase, and my legs are scarce able to support the weight of his bounties. *[Exit.]*

Mot. He looks like an overgrown turtle, waddling upon its hind fins. Yet, at bottom, 'tis a good fellow enough; warm-hearted, benevolent, friendly, and sincere; but no more intended by nature to be a monk, than I to be a maid of honour to the Queen of Sheba. *(Going.)*

Enter PERCY.

Per. I cannot be mistaken. In spite of his dress, his features are too well known to me. Hist! Gilbert! Gilbert!

Mot. Gilbert? Oh Lord! that's I!—Who calls?

Per. Have you forgotten me?

Mot. Truly, sir, that would be no easy matter; I never forgot in my life what I never knew.

Per. Have ten years altered me so much, that you cannot—

Mot. Eh!—can it be? Pardon me, my dear Lord Percy. In truth, you may well forgive my having forgotten *your* name, for at first I didn't very well remember *my* own. However, to prevent further mistakes, I must inform you, that he, who in your father's service was Gilbert the knave, is Motley the fool in the service of Earl Osmond.

Per. Of Earl Osmond! This is fortunate, Gilbert, you may be of use to me; and if the attachment which, as a boy, you professed for me still exists—

Mot. It does, with ardour unabated; for I'm not so unjust as to attribute to you my expulsion from Aliwick-castle. But now, sir, may I ask, what brings you to Wales?

Per. A woman whom I adore.

Mot. Yes, I guessed that the business was about a petticoat. And this woman is—

Per. The orphan ward of a villager, without friends, without family, without fortune!

Mot. Great points in her favour, I must confess. And which of these excellent qualities won your heart?

Per. I hope I had better reasons for bestowing it on her. No, Gilbert; I loved her for a person beautiful without art, and graceful without affectation; for a heart tender without weakness, and noble without pride. I saw her at once beloved and revered by her village companions; they looked on her as a being of a superior order: and I felt that she, who gave such dignity to the cottage maid, must needs add new lustre to the coronet of the Percies.

Mot. From which I am to understand, that you mean to marry this rustic?

Per. Could I mean otherwise, I should blush for myself.

Mot. Yet surely the baseness of her origin—

Per. Can to me be no objection: in giving her my hand, I raise her to my station, not debase myself to her's; nor ever, while gazing on the beauty of a rose, did I think it less fair because planted by a peasant.

Mot. Bravo!—And what says your good grumbling father to this?

Per. Alas! he has long slept in the grave.

Mot. Then he's quiet at last! Well, heaven grant him that peace above, which he suffered nobody to enjoy below. But what obstacle now prevents your marriage?

Per. You shall hear.—Fearful lest my rank should influence this lovely girl's affections, and induce her to bestow her hand on the noble, while she refused her heart to the man, I assumed a peasant's habit, and presented myself as Edwy the low-born and the poor. In this character I gained her heart, and resolved to hail, as Countess of Northumberland, the betrothed of Edwy the low-born and the poor. Judge, then, how great must have been my disappointment, when, on entering her guardian's cottage with this design, he informed me,

that the unknown, who sixteen years before had confided her to his care, had reclaimed her on that very morning, and conveyed her no one knew whither.

Mot. That was unlucky.

Per. However, in spite of his precautions, I have traced the stranger's course, and find him to be Kenrie, a dependant upon Earl Osmond.

Mot. Surely 'tis not lady Angela, who—

Per. The very same. Speak, my good fellow: do you know her?

Mot. Not by your description; for here she's understood to be the daughter of Sir Malcolm Mowbray, my master's deceased friend. And what is your present intention?

Per. To demand her of the Earl in marriage.

Mot. Oh! that will never do: for, in the first place, you'll not be able to get a sight at him. I've now lived with him five long years; and, 'till Angela's arrival, never witnessed a guest in the castle. Oh! 'tis the most melancholy mansion! And, as to the Earl, he's the very antidote to mirth. None dare approach him, except Kenrie and his four blacks; all others are ordered to avoid him; and whenever he quits his room, ding! dong! goes a great bell, and away run the servants like so many scared rabbits.

Per. Strange!—and *what* reasons can he have for—

Mot. Oh! reasons in plenty. You must know there's an ugly story respecting the last owners of this castle. Osmond's brother, his wife, and infant child, were murdered by banditti, as it was said: unluckily, the only servant who escaped the slaughter deposed, that he recognised among the assassins a black still in the service of Earl Osmond. The truth of this assertion was never known, for the servant was found dead in his bed the next morning.

Per. Good heavens!

Mot. Since that time, no sound of joy has been heard in Conway-castle. Osmond instantly became gloomy and ferocious. He now never utters a sound except a sigh, has broken every tie of society, and keeps his gates barred unceasingly against the stranger.

Per. Yet Angela is admitted. But no doubt affection for her father—

Mot. Why, no; I rather think that affection for her father's child—

Per. How!

Mot. If I've any knowledge in love, the Earl feels it for his fair ward; but the lady will tell you more of this, if I can procure for you an interview.

Per. The very request, which—

Mot. 'Tis no easy matter, I promise you; but I'll do my best. In the meanwhile, wait for me in yonder fishing-hut: its owner's name is Edric; tell him that I sent you, and he will give you a retreat.

Per. Farewell, then; and remember, that whatever reward—

Mot. Dear master, to mention a reward insults me. You have already shewn me kindness; and when 'tis in my power to be of use to you, to need the inducement of a second favour would prove me a scoundrel undeserving of the first. *[Exit.]*

Per. How warm is this good fellow's attachment! Yet our barons complain that the great can have no friends. If they have none, let their own pride bear the blame. Instead of looking with scorn on those whom a smile would attract, and a favour bind for ever, how many firm friends might our nobles gain, if they would but reflect that their vassals are men as they are, and have hearts whose feelings can be grateful as their own. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II.—*The Castle Hall.*

Enter SAIB and HASSAN.

Saib. Now, Hassan; what success?

Has. My search has been fruitless. In vain have I paced the river's banks, and pierced the grove's deepest recesses. Nor glen nor thicket have I passed unexplored, yet found no stranger to whom Kenrie's description could apply.

Saib. Saw you no one?

Has. A troop of horsemen passed me as I left the wood.

Saib. Horsemen, say you? Then Kenric may be right. Earl Percy has discovered Angela's abode; and lurks near the castle, in hopes of carrying her off.

Has. His hopes then will be vain. Osmond's vigilance will not easily be eluded; sharpened by those powerful motives, love and fear.

Saib. His love, I know; but should he lose Angela, what has he to fear?

Has. If Percy gain her, everything. Supported by such wealth and power, dangerous would be her claim to these domains, should her birth be discovered. Of this our lord is aware; nor did he sooner hear that Northumberland loved her, than he hastened to remove her from Allan's care. At first, I doubt his purpose was a foul one: her resemblance to her mother induced him to change it. He now is resolved to make her his bride, and restore to her those rights of which himself deprived her.

Saib. Think you the lady perceives that our master loves her?

Has. I know she does not. Absorbed in her own passion for Percy, on Osmond she bestows no thought; and, while roving through these pompous halls and chambers, sighs for the Cheviot-hills, and Allan's humble cottage.

Saib. But as she still believes Percy to be a low-born swain, when Osmond lays his coronet at her feet, will she reject his rank and splendour?

Has. If she loves well, she will. *Saib.* I too have loved. I have known how painful it was to leave her on whom my heart hung; how incapable was all else to supply her loss. I have exchanged want for plenty; fatigue for rest; a wretched hut for a splendid palace. But am I happier? O, no! Still do I regret my native land, and the partners of my poverty. Then toil was sweet to me, for I laboured for Samba! then repose ever blessed my bed of leaves; for there, by my side, lay Samba sleeping.

Saib. This from you, Hassan? Did love ever find a place in your flinty bosom?

Has. Did it? Oh, *Saib!* my heart once was gentle, once was good; but sorrows have broken it, insults have made it hard. I have been dragged from my native land; from a wife who was everything to me, to whom I was everything! Twenty years have elapsed since these Christians tore me away; they trampled upon my heart, mocked my despair, and, when in frantic terms I raved of Samba, laughed, and wondered how a negro's soul could feel. In that moment, when the last point of Africa faded from my view,—when, as I stood on the vessel's deck, I felt that all I loved was to me lost for ever—in that bitter moment, did I banish humanity from my breast. I tore from my arm the bracelet of Samba's hair; I gave to the sea the precious token; and while the high waves swift bore it from me, vowed aloud, endless hatred to mankind. I have kept my oath; I will keep it!

Saib. Ill-starred Hassan! your wrongs have indeed been great.

Has. To remember them unmans me. Farewell! I must to Kenric. Hold! Look, where he comes from Osmond's chamber.

Saib. And seemingly in wrath.

Has. His conferences with the Earl of late have had no other end. The period of his favour is arrived.

Saib. Not of his favour merely, Hassan.

Has. How! Mean you that—

Saib. Silence! He's here! you shall know more anon.

Enter KENRIC.

Ken. Ungrateful Osmond, I will bear your ingratitude no longer. Now, Hassan, found you the man described?

Has. Nor any that resembled him.

Ken. Yet, that I saw Percy, I am convinced. As I crossed him in the wood, his eye met mine. He started as had he seen a basilisk, and fled with rapidity. But I will submit no longer to this painful dependance. To-morrow, for the last time, will I summon him to perform his promise: if he refuse, I will bid him farewell for ever; and, by my absence, free him from a restraint equally irksome to myself and him.

Saib. Will you so, Kenric? Be speedy then, or you will be too late.

Ken. Too late! And wherefore?

Saib. You will soon receive the reward of your services.

Ken. Ha! Know you what the reward will be?

Saib. I guess,—but may not tell.

Ken. Is it a secret?

Saib. Can you keep one?

Ken. Faithfully.

Saib. As faithfully can I. Come, Hassan. [*Exeunt.*]

Ken. What meant the slave? Those doubtful expressions—Ha! should the Earl intend me false! Kenric! Kenric! how is thy nature changed! There was a time when fear was a stranger to my bosom; when guiltless myself, I dreaded not art in others. Now, where'er I turn me, danger appears to lurk; and I suspect treachery in every breast, because my own heart hides it. [*Exit.*]

Enter FATHER PHILIP, followed by ALICE.

F. Phil. Nonsense! You silly woman; what you say is not possible.

Alice. I never said it was possible: I only said it was true; and that if ever I heard music, I heard it last night.

F. Phil. Perhaps the Fool was singing to the servants.

Alice. The Fool, indeed! Oh! fie! fie! How dare you call my lady's ghost a fool?

F. Phil. Your lady's ghost! You silly old woman!

Alice. Yes, Father, yes; I repeat it, I heard the guitar, lying upon the oratory table, play the very air which the lady Evelina used to sing while rocking her little daughter's cradle. She warbled it so sweetly, and ever at the close it went—(*Singing.*)

“Lullaby! Lullaby! hush thee, my dear!

Thy father is coming, and soon will be here!”

F. Phil. Nonsense! Nonsense! Why, pr'ythee, Alice, do you think that your lady's ghost would get up at night only to sing lullaby for your amusement? Besides, how should a spirit, which is nothing but air, play upon an instrument of material wood and catgut?

Alice. How can I tell?—Why, I know very well that men are made; but if you desired me to make a man, I vow and protest I shouldn't know how to set about it. I can only say, that last night I heard the ghost of my murdered lady—

F. Phil. Playing upon the spirit of a cracked guitar! Alice! Alice! these fears are ridiculous! The idea of ghosts is a vulgar prejudice; and they, who are timid and absurd enough to encourage it, prove themselves the most contemptible—

Alice. (*Screaming.*) Oh! Lord bless us!

F. Phil. What?—Eh!—Oh! dear!

Alice. Look! look!—A figure in white!—It comes from the haunted room!

F. Phil. (*Dropping on his knees.*) Blessed St. Patrick!—Who has got my beads? Where's my prayer-book?—It comes!—It comes! Now! now!—Lack-a-day! it's only lady Angela! (*Rising.*) Lack-a-day! I am glad of it with all my heart!

Alice. Truly so am I.—But what say you now, Father, to the fear of spectres?

F. Phil. Why, the next time you are afraid of a ghost, remember and make use of the receipt which I shall now give you; and instead of calling for a priest to lay the spirits of other people in the red sea, call for a bottle of red wine to raise your own. *Probatum est.* [*Exit.*]

Alice. Wine, indeed!—I believe he thinks I like drinking as well as himself. No, no: let the old toping friar take his bottle of wine; I shall confine myself to plain cherry brandy.

Enter ANGELA.

Ang. I am weary of wandering from room to room; in vain do I change the scene, discontent is everywhere. There was a time, when music could delight my ear, and nature could charm my eye—when I could pour forth a prayer of gratitude, and thank my good angels for a day unclouded by sorrow. Now, all is gone, all lost, all faded! (*Aside.*)

Alice. Lady!

Ang. Perhaps at this moment he thinks upon me. Perhaps then he sighs, and murmurs to himself, “The flowers, the rivulets, the birds, every object reminds me of my well-beloved; but what shall remind her of Edwy?”—Oh! that will my heart, Edwy; I need no other remembrancer. (*Aside.*)

Alice. Lady! lady Angela! She minds me no more than a post.

Ang. Oh! are you there, good Alice? What would you with me?

Alice. Only ask how your ladyship rested?

Ang. Ill; very ill.

Alice. Lack-a-day! and yet you sleep in the best bed!

Ang. True, good Alice; but my heart’s anguish strewed thorns upon my couch of down.

Alice. Marry! I’m not surprised that you rested ill in the cedar-room. Those noises so near you—

Ang. What noises? I heard none.

Alice. How?—When the clock struck one, heard you no music?

Ang. Music!—None.—Not that I—Stay; now I remember, that while I sat alone in my chamber this morning—

Alice. Well, lady, well!

Ang. Methought I heard some one singing; it seemed as if the words ran thus:—(*Singing*) “Lullaby! Lullaby! hush thee, my dear!”

Alice. (*Screaming.*) The very words!—It was the ghost, lady! it was the ghost!

Ang. The ghost, Alice! I protest I thought it had been you.

Alice. Me, lady! Lord! when did you hear this singing?

Ang. Not five minutes ago; while you were talking with Father Philip.

Alice. The lord be thanked!—Then it was not the ghost. It was I, lady! It was I!—And have you heard no other singing since you came to the castle?

Ang. None. But why that question?

Alice. Because, lady—But perhaps you may be frightened?

Ang. No, no!—Proceed, I entreat you.

Alice. Why, then, they do say, that the chamber in which you sleep is haunted. You may have observed two folding doors, which are ever kept locked: they lead to the oratory, in which the lady Evelina passed most of her time, while my lord was engaged in the Scottish wars. She would sit there, good soul! hour after hour, playing on the lute, and singing airs so sweet, so sad, that many a time and oft have I wept to hear her. Ah! when I kissed her hand at the castle-gate, little did I suspect that her fate would have been so wretched.

Ang. And what was her fate?

Alice. A sad one, lady! Impatient to embrace her lord, after a year’s absence, the Countess set out to meet him on his return from Scotland, accompanied by a few domestics and her infant daughter, then scarce a twelvemonth old. But, as she returned with her husband, robbers surprised the party scarce a mile from the castle; and, since that time, no news has been received of the Earl, of the Countess, the servants, or the child.

Ang. Dreadful! Were not their corse found?

Alice. Never. The only domestic who escaped, pointed out the scene of action; and, as it proved to be on the river’s banks, doubtless the assassins plunged the bodies into the stream.

Ang. Strange! And did Earl Osmond then become owner of this castle? Alice, was he ever suspected of—

Alice. Speak lower, lady. It was said so, I own; but for my own part I never believed it. To my certain knowledge, Osmond loved the lady Evelina too well to hurt her; and when he heard of her death, he wept and sobbed as if his heart were breaking. Nay, ’tis certain that he proposed to her before marriage, and would have made her his wife, only that she liked his brother better. But I hope you are not alarmed by what I mentioned of the cedar-room?

Ang. No, truly, Alice; from good spirits I have nothing to fear, and heaven and my innocence will protect me against bad.

Alice. My very sentiments, I protest. But heaven forgive me; while I stand gossiping here, I warrant all goes wrong in the kitchen. Your pardon, lady; I must away, I must away. [*Exit.*]

Ang. (*Musing.*) Osmond was his brother’s heir.—His strange demcanour!—Yes, in that gloomy brow is written a volume of villainy.—Heavenly powers! an assassin then is master of my fate!—An assassin too, who—I dare not bend my thoughts that way.—Oh! would I had never entered these castle walls!—had never exchanged for fearful pomp the security of my pleasures—the tranquillity of my soul! [*Exit.*]

ACT II.—SCENE I. *The Armoury.*

Suits of armour are arranged on both sides upon pedestals, with the names of their possessors written under each.

Enter MOTLEY, peeping.

The coast is clear. Hist! hist! You may enter.

Enter PERCY.

Per. Loiter not here. Quick! my good fellow! Conduct me to Angela.

Mot. Softly, softly. A little caution is needful; and I promise you just now I’m not upon roses.

Per. If such are your fears, why not lead me at once to Angela?

Mot. Be contented, and leave all to me: I will contrive matters so, that Osmond shall have you before his eyes, and be no jot the wiser. But you must make up your mind to play a statue for an hour or two.

Per. How!

Mot. Nay, ’tis absolutely necessary. The late Earl’s servants are fully persuaded that his ghost wanders every night through the long galleries, and parades the old towers and dreary halls which abound in this melancholy mansion. He is supposed to be dressed in complete armour; and that which you are to wear at present was formerly his. Now hear my plan. The Earl prepares to hold a conference with lady Angela; here, placed upon the pedestal, you may listen to their discourse unobserved, and thus form a proper judgment both of your mistress and her guardian. As soon as it grows dark, I will conduct you to Angela’s apartments: and even should you be observed, you will pass for Earl Reginald’s spectre.

Per. I do not dislike your plan: but tell me, Gilbert, do you believe this tale of the apparition?

Mot. Oh! heaven forbid! Not a word of it. Had I minded all the strange things related of this castle, I should have died of fright in the first half hour. Why, they say, that Earl Hubert rides every night round the castle on a white horse; that the ghost of Lady Bertha haunts the west pinnacle of the chapel tower; and that Lord Hildebrand, who was condemned for treason some sixty years ago, may be seen in the great hall, regu-

larly at midnight, walking about without his head. Above all, they say, that the spirit of the late Countess sits nightly in her oratory, and sings her baby to sleep. Quick! quick! ere the servants quit the hall, where they are now at dinner. (*Takes down a suit of armour.*) Here's the helmet—the gauntlets—the shield. So now, take the truncheon in your hand, and there we have you armed cap-a-pie.—(*Bell sounds thrice.*)—Hark! 'tis the Earl; quick, to your post. (*Percy ascends the pedestal.*) Farewell—I must get out of his way; but as soon as he quits this chamber, I'll rejoin you. [Exit.

(*The folding doors are thrown open; Saib, Hassan, Muley, and Alaric enter, preceding Earl Osmond, who walks with his arms folded, and his eyes bent upon the ground. Saib advances to a sofa, into which, after making a few turns through the room, Osmond throws himself. He motions to his attendants, and they withdraw. He appears lost in thought; then suddenly rises, and again traverses the room with disordered steps.*)

Osm. I will not sacrifice my happiness to her's! No, Angela, you ask of me too much. Since the moment when I pierced her heart, deprived of whom life became odious; since my soul was stained with his blood who loved me; with her's whom I loved; no form has been grateful to my eye, no voice spoken pleasure to my soul, save Angela's, save only Angela's!—Mine she is; mine she shall be, though Reginald's bleeding ghost flit before me, and thunder in my ear—"Hold! Hold!"—Peace, stormy heart! She comes!

Enter ANGELA.

Osm. (*In a softened voice.*) Come hither, Angela. Wherefore so sad? That downcast eye, that listless air, neither suit your age or fortunes. The treasures of India are lavished to adorn your person; yet, still do I see you, forgetting what you are, look back with regret to what you were.

Ang. Oh! my good lord! esteem me not ungrateful. I acknowledge your bounties; but they have not made me happy. I still linger, in thought, near those scenes where I passed the blessed period of infancy; I still thirst for those simple pleasures which habit has made so dear; the birds which my own hands reared; and the flowers which my own hands planted; the banks on which I rested when fatigued; all have acquired rights to my memory and my love.

Osm. Absurd!

Ang. While I saw you, Cheviot-hills, I was happy; oh! how happy! At morn, when I left my bed, light were my spirits, and gay as the zephyrs of summer; and when at night my head again pressed my pillow, I whispered to myself, "happy has been to-day, and to-morrow will be as happy!" Then sweet was my sleep; and my dreams were of those whom I loved dearest.

Osm. Romantic enthusiast! These thoughts did well for the village maid, but disgrace the daughter of Sir Malcolm Mowbray. Hear me, Angela. An English baron loves you; a nobleman, than whom our island boasts few more potent. 'Tis to him that your hand is destined; 'tis on him that your heart must be bestowed.

Ang. I cannot dispose of that which has long been another's. My heart is Edwy's.

Osm. Edwy's? A peasant's?

Ang. For the obscurity of his birth, chance must be blamed; the merit of his virtues belongs wholly to himself.

Osm. By heaven! you seem to think that poverty is a virtue.

Ang. Sir, I think 'tis a misfortune, not a crime. Edwy has my plighted faith. He received it on the last evening which I passed in Northumberland. It was then, that, for the first time, I gave him my hand, and I swore that I never would give it but

to him! It was then, that, for the first time, he pressed his lips to mine, and I swore that my lips should never be pressed by another.

Osm. Girl! girl! you drive me to distraction!

Ang. You alarm me, my lord! Permit me to retire.—(*Going, Osmond detains her violently by the arm.*)

Osm. Stay! (*In a softer tone.*) Angela, I love you.

Ang. (*Starting.*) My lord!

Osm. (*Passionately.*) Love you to madness. Nay, strive not to escape: remain, and hear me. I offer you my hand; if you accept it, mistress of these fair and rich domains, your days shall glide away in happiness and honour; but, if you refuse and scorn my offer, force shall this instant—

Ang. Force! Oh! no! You dare not be so base.

Osm. Reflect on your situation, Angela; you are in my power. Remember it, and be wise.

Ang. If you have a generous mind, that will be my surest safeguard. Be it my plea, Osmond, when thus I sue to you for mercy, for protection. Look on me with pity, Osmond! 'Tis the daughter of the man you loved; 'tis a creature, friendless, wretched, and forlorn, who kneels before you, who flies to you for refuge! True, I am in your power; then save me, respect me, treat me not cruelly; for—I am in your power!

Osm. I will hear no more. Will you accept my offer?

Ang. Osmond, I conjure you—

Osm. Answer my question.

Ang. Mercy! Mercy!

Osm. Will you be mine?—Speak! Speak!

Ang. (*After a moment's pause, rises, and pronounces with firmness.*) Never! so help me heaven!

Osm. (*Seizing her.*) Your fate then is decided. (*Angela shrieks.*)

Per. (*In a hollow voice.*) Hold!

Osm. (*Starts, but still grasps Angela's arm.*) Ha! what was that?

Ang. (*Struggling to escape.*) Hark! hark! Heard you not a voice?

Osm. (*Gazing upon Percy.*) It came from hence! From Reginald! Was it not a delusion? Did indeed his spirit—(*Relapsing into his former passion.*) Well, be it so! Though his ghost should rush between us, thus would I clasp her!—horror! What sight is this?—(*At the moment that he again seizes Angela, Percy extends his truncheon with a menacing gesture, and descends from the pedestal. Osmond releases Angela, who immediately rushes from the chamber; while Percy advances a few steps, and remains gazing on the Earl steadfastly.*) I know that shield!—that helmet! Speak to me, dreadful vision!—Tax me with my crimes!—Tell me that you come—Stay! Speak!—(*Following Percy, who, when he reaches the door, through which Angela escaped, turns, and signs to him with his hand. Osmond starts back in terror.*)—He forbids my following!—He leaves me!—The door closes!—(*In a sudden burst of passion, and drawing his sword.*)—Hell, and fiends! I'll follow him, though lightnings blast me!—(*He rushes distractedly from the chamber.*)

SCENE II.—The Castle Hall.

Enter ALICE.

Alice. Here's rudeness! here's ill-breeding! On my conscience, this house grows worse and worse every day!

Enter MOTLEY.

Mot. What can Earl Percy have done with himself? How now, dame Alice; you look angry.

Alice. By my troth, fool, I have little reason to look pleased. To be frightened out of my wits by night, and thumped and bumped about by day, is not likely to put one in the best humour.

Mot. Poor soul! And who has been thumping and bumping you?

Alice. Who has? You should rather ask who has not. Why only hear. As I was just now going along the narrow passage which leads to the armoury, singing to myself, and thinking of nothing,

I met lady Angela flying away as if for dear life. So I dropped her a curtesy; but might as well have spared my pains. Without minding me any more than if I had been a dog or a cat, she pushed me on one side; and before I could recover my balance, somebody else, who came bouncing by me, gave me t'other thump; and there I lay sprawling upon the floor. However, I tumbled with all possible decency.

Mot. Somebody else! What somebody else?

Alice. I know not; but he seemed to be in armour.

Mot. In armour! Pray, Alice, looked he like a ghost?

Alice. What he looked like, I cannot say; but I'm sure he didn't feel like one; however, you've not heard the worst. While I was sprawling upon the ground, my lord comes tearing along the passage. The first thing he did was to stumble against me. Away went his heels—over he came—and in the twinkling of an eye, there lay his lordship! As soon as he got up again, mercy! how he stormed! He snatched me up, called me an ugly old witch, shook the breath out of my body, then clapped me on the ground again, and bounced away after the other two.

Mot. My mind misgives me. But what can this mean, Alice?

Alice. The meaning I neither know nor care about; but this I know,—I'll stay no longer in a house where I am treated so disrespectfully. "My lady!" says I:—"Out of my way!" says she, and pushes me on one side.—"My lord!" says I:—"You be d—d!" says he, and pushes me on t'other! I protest I never was so ill used, even when I was a young woman! *[Exit.]*

Mot. Should Earl Percy be discovered! The very thought gives me a crick in my neck. At any rate I had better inquire whether—*(Going.)*

Enter FATHER PHILIP, hastily.

F. Phil. *(Stopping him.)* Get out of the house! That's your way.

Mot. Why, what's the meaning—

F. Phil. Don't stand prating, but do as I bid you.

Mot. But first tell me—

F. Phil. I can only tell you to get out of the house. Kenric has discovered Earl Percy. You are known to have introduced him. The Africans are in search of you. If you are found, you will be hung out of hand. Fly then to Edric's cottage; hide yourself there. Hark! Some one comes. Away, away, ere it is too late.—*(Pushing him out.)*

Mot. *(Confused.)* But Earl Percy—but Angela—

F. Phil. Leave them to me. You shall hear from me soon. Only take care of yourself, and fly with all diligence. Away! *[Exit Motley.]* So, so; he's off; and now I've time to take breath. I've not moved so nimbly for the last twenty years; and, in truth, I'm at present but ill calculated for velocity of motion; however, my exertions have not been thrown away; I have saved this poor knave from Osmond's vengeance; and should my plan for the lady's release succeed—Poor little soul!—To see how she took on, when Percy was torn from her! Well, well, she shall be rescued from her tyrant. The moveable pannels—the subterraneous passages, the secret springs, well known to me—Oh! I cannot fail of success; but, in order to secure it, I'll finally arrange my ideas in the buttery. Whenever I've any great design in hand, I always ask advice of a flaggon of ale, and mature my plan over a cold venison-pasty. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III.—*A spacious Chamber; on one side is a couch; on the other, a table, which is placed under an arched and lofty window.*

Enter OSMOND, followed by SAIB, HASSAN, MULEY, and ALARIC, who conduct PERCY, disarmed.

Osm. This, sir, is your prison; but doubtless, your confinement will not continue long. The mo-

ment which gives me Angela's hand, shall restore you to liberty; and, 'till that moment arrives, farewell.

Per. Stay, sir, and hear me! By what authority presume you to call me captive? Have you forgotten that you speak to Northumberland's Earl?

Osm. Well may I forget him, who could so far forget himself. Was it worthy of Northumberland's Earl to steal disguised into my castle, and plot with my servant to rob me of my most precious treasure?

Per. Mine was that treasure. You deprived me of it basely; and I was justified in striving to regain my own.

Osm. Earl, nothing can justify unworthy means. If you were wronged, why sought you not your right with your sword's point? I then should have esteemed you a noble foe, and as such would have treated you; but you have stooped to paltry artifice, and attacked me like some midnight ruffian, privately, and in disguise. By this am I authorised to forget your station, and make your penance as degrading as your offence was base.

Per. If such are indeed your sentiments, prove them now. Restore my sword, unsheathe your own; and be Angela the conqueror's reward.

Osm. No, Earl Percy. I am not so rash a gamester as to suffer that cast to be recalled, by which the stake is mine already. Angela is in my power; the only man who could wrest her from my arms has wilfully made himself my captive; such he is, and such he shall remain.

Per. Insulting coward!

Osm. Be calm, Earl Percy. You forget yourself. That I am no coward, my sword has proved in the fields of Scotland. My sword shall again prove it, if, when you are restored to liberty, you still question the courage of my heart. Angela once mine, repeat your defiance, nor doubt my answering.

Per. Angela thine? That she shall never be. There are angels above, who favour virtue, and the hour of retribution must one day arrive.

Osm. Muley and Saib!

Both. My lord!

Osm. To your charge I commit the Earl; quit not this apartment, nor suffer him for one moment from your sight.

Saib and Muley. My lord, we shall obey you.

Osm. Farewell, Earl Percy.

[Goes off, attended by Hassan and Alaric.]

Saib. Look, Muley, how bitterly he frowns!

Muley. Now he starts from the sofa. 'Faith! he's in a monstrous fury.

Saib. That may well be. When you mean to take in other people, it certainly is provoking to be taken in yourself.

Per. *(After walking a few turns with a disordered air, suddenly stops.)* He is gone to Angela! Gone, perhaps, to renew that outrage; whose completion my presence alone prevented.

Muley. Now he's in a deep study. Marry, if he studies himself out of this tower, he's a cleverer fellow than I take him for.

Per. Were I not Osmond's captive, all might yet be well. Summoning my vassals, who by this time must be near at hand, forcing the castle, and tearing Angela from the arms of her tyrant. Alas! my captivity has rendered this plan impracticable. And are there then no hopes of liberty?

Saib. He fixes his eyes on us.

Per. Might not these fellows—I can but try. Now stand my friend, thou master-key to human hearts! Aid me, thou potent devil, gold! Hear me, my worthy friends. Come nearer!

Saib. His worthy friends!

Per. My good fellows, you are charged with a disagreeable office, and to obey a tyrant's mandates cannot be pleasant to you; there is something in your looks which has prejudiced me too much in your favour to believe it possible.

Saib. Nay, there certainly is something in our appearance highly prepossessing.

Muley. And I know that you must admire the delicacy of our complexions!

Per. The tincture of your skin, my good fellow, is of little consequence; many a worthy heart beats within a dusky bosom, and I am convinced that such a heart inhabits your's; for your looks tell me that you feel for, and are anxious to relieve my sufferings. See you this purse, my friends?

Muley. It's too far off, and I am short-sighted. If you'll put it a little nearer—

Per. Restore me to liberty; and not this purse alone, but ten times its value shall be yours.

Saib. To liberty?

Muley. That purse?

Saib. Muley!

Muley. Saib!

Per. (*Aside.*) By all my hopes, they hesitate! You well know, that my wealth and power are equal, if not superior, to Earl Osmond's: release me from my dungeon, and share that power and wealth!

Saib. I know not what to answer.

Muley. In truth, my lord, your offers are so generous, and that purse is so tempting—Saib, what say you? (*Winking at him.*)

Saib. The Earl speaks so well, and promises so largely, that I own I am strangely tempted.

Muley. Look you, Saib; will you stand by me?

Saib. (*After a moment's thought.*) I will.

Muley. There's my hand then. My lord, we are your servants.

Per. This is beyond my hopes. You agree then to release me?

Muley. 'Tis impossible to do otherwise; for I feel that pity, generosity, and every moral feeling, command me to trouble your lordship for that purse.

Per. There it is. And now unlock the door.

Muley. (*Chinking the purse.*) Here it is! And now I'm obliged to you. As for your promises, my lord, pray don't trouble yourself to remember them, as I sha'n't trouble myself to remember mine.

Per. (*Starting.*) Ha! what mean you?

Saib. (*Firmly.*) Earl, that we are faithful.

Per. What! will you not keep your word?

Muley. In good troth, no; we mean to keep nothing—except the purse.

Per. Confusion! To be made the jest of such rascals.

Saib. Earl Percy, we are none. We have but done our duty—you have but gained your just reward; for they who seek to deceive others should ever be deceived themselves.

Per. Silence, fellow! Leave me to my thoughts. (*Throwing himself passionately upon the couch.*)

Muley. Oh! with all our hearts. We ask no better.

Saib. Muley, we share that purse?

Muley. Undoubtedly. Sit down, and examine its contents. (*They seat themselves on the floor in the front of the stage.*)

Per. How unfortunate! that the only merit of these fellows should be fidelity.

CHORUS OF VOICES. (*Singing without.*)

"Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!"

Muley. Hark! What's that?

Saib. I'll see. (*Mounting upon the table.*) This window is so high—

Muley. Here, here! Take this chair. (*Saib places the chair upon the table, and thus lifts himself to a level with the window, which he opens.*)

SONG AND CHORUS.

Mot. (*Singing without.*) Sleep you, or wake you, lady bright?

Chorus. Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!

Mot. Now is the fittest time for flight.

Chorus. Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!

Mot. Know, from your tyrant father's power,
Beneath the window of your tower,

A boat now waits to set you free;

Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!

Chorus. Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!

Per. (*Who has half-raised himself from the couch during the latter part of the song, and listened attentively.*) Surely I know that voice!

Muley. Now, what's the matter?

Saib. A boat lies at the foot of the tower, and the fishermen sing while they draw their nets.

Per. I could not be mistaken; it was Gilbert.

SECOND STANZA.

Mot. Though deep the stream, though high the wall,

Chorus. Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!

Mot. The danger trust me, love, is small;

Chorus. Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!

Mot. To spring below then never dread;

My arms to catch you shall be spread;

And far from hence you soon shall be,

Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!

Chorus. Sing Megen-oh! Oh! Megen-Ee!

Per. I understand him. He bids me—Yet the danger—What course shall I pursue?

Muley. Pr'ythee, come down, Saib; I long to divide the purse.

Saib. Stay a moment; I'm with you. (*Shutting the window and descending.*) Here I am; and now for the purse. (*They resume their seats upon the ground; Saib opens the purse, and begins to reckon the gold.*)

Per. Yes, I must brave the danger. I will feign to sleep; and when my gaolers are off their guard, then aid me, blest Providence! (*Extending himself upon the couch.*)

Saib. Hold, Muley! What if, instead of sharing the purse, we throw for its contents? Here are dice.

Muley. With all my heart; and look: to pass our time the better, here's a bottle of the best sack in the Earl's cellar.

Saib. Good! Good! And now, be this angel the stake. But first, what is our prisoner doing?

Muley. Oh! he sleeps; mind him not. Come, come; throw.

Saib. Here goes. Nine! Now to you.

Muley. Nine too! Double the stake.

Saib. Agreed; and the throw is mine. Hark! What noise? (*During this dialogue, Percy has approached the table in silence: at the moment that he prepares to mount it, Saib looks round, and Percy hastily throws himself back on the couch.*)

Muley. Oh!—nothing, nothing.

Saib. Methought I heard the Earl—

Muley. Mere fancy. You see he is sleeping soundly. Come, come; throw.

Saib. There then: eleven!

Muley. That's bad: huzza!—sixes!

Saib. Plague on your fortune! Come, double or quits.

Muley. Be it so, and I throw—zounds! only five.

Saib. Then I think this hit must be mine: aces, by heavens!

Muley. Ha! ha!—your health, friend!

Per. (*Who has again reached the table, mounted the chair, and opening the window, now stands at it, and signs to the men below.*) They see me, and extend a cloth beneath the window. 'Tis a fearful height!

Saib. Do you mean to empty the bottle? Come, come; give it to me.

Muley. Take it, blunderhead. (*Saib drinks.*)

Per. They encourage me to venture. Now then, or never. (*Aloud.*) Angels of bliss, protect me! (*He throws himself from the window.*)

Muley and Saib. (*Starting at the noise.*) Hell and furies!

Saib. (*Dashes down the bottle and climbs to the window hastily, while Muley remains below in an attitude of surprise.*) Escaped! Escaped!

Per. *Mot.* &c. (*Without.*) Huzza! huzza!

ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A View of the River Conway, with a fisherman's hut. Sun-set.*

Enter ALLAN and EDRIC.

Allan. Still they come not. Dear, dear, still they come not. Ah! these tumults are too much for my old body to bear.

Edr. Then you should have kept your old body at home. 'Tis a fine thing, truly, for a man of your age to be galloping about the country after a girl, who, by your own account, is neither your chick nor child.

Allan. Ah! she was more to me. She was my all, Edric, my all. How could I bear my home when it no longer was the home of Angela? How could I rest in my cottage at night, when her sweet lips had not kissed me, and murmured, "Father, sleep well!" She is so good, so gentle! I was sick once, sick almost to death. Angela was then my nurse and comforter; she watched me when I slept, and cheered me when I awoke; she rejoiced when I grew better; and when I grew worse, no medicine gave me ease like the tears of pity which fell on my burning cheeks from the eyes of my darling.

Edr. Tears of pity, indeed! A little rhubarb would have done you more good by half. But our people stay a long time; perhaps Motley has been discovered and seized; if so, he will lose his life, the Earl his freedom, Angela her lover, and, what's worst of all, I shall lose my boat. I wish I hadn't lent it, for I doubt that Motley's scheme has failed.

Allan. I hope not. Oh! I hope not. Should Percy remain a captive, Angela will be left unprotected in your wicked lord's power. Oh! that will break my poor old wife's heart for certain.

Edr. And if it should break it, a mighty misfortune truly! Zounds! master Allan, any wife is at best a bad thing; a poor one makes matters yet worse; but when she's old,—lord! 'tis the very devil.

Allan. Hark! hark! Do you hear? 'Tis the sound of oars! They are friends! Oh! heaven be thanked! the Earl is with them. (*A boat appears, with Percy, Motley, and soldiers, disguised as fishermen. They land.*)

Per. (*Springing on shore.*) Once more then I breathe the air of liberty! Worthy Gilbert, what words can suffice to thank you?

Mot. None; therefore do not waste your breath in the attempt. You are safe, thanks to St. Peter and the blanket! and your lady's deliverance now demands all your thoughts. Ha! who is that with Edric?

Per. Allan, by all my hopes!—Welcome, welcome, good old man: say, came my vassals with you?

Allan. Three hundred chosen men are within the sound of your bugle; but now, my lord, tell me of Angela. Is she well? Did you speak to her? And speaks she sometimes of me?

Per. She is well, my old friend, and I have spoken to her; though but for a moment. But be comforted, good Allan! Should other means fail, I will this very night attack the castle, and compel Osmond to resign his prey.

Allan. Heaven grant that you may succeed! Let me but once see Angela your bride; let me but once hear her say the sweet words, "Allan, I am happy!" then I and my old wife will seek our graves, lay us down, and die with pleasure.

Mot. Die with pleasure, you silly old man! you shall do nothing so ridiculous.—But now let us talk of our affairs, which, if I mistake not, are in the high road to success.

Per. How! Has any intelligence reached you of your ally, the friar?

Mot. You have guessed it. As it passed beneath his window, the pious porpus contrived to

drop this letter into the boat. Pray examine it, my lord. I never can read when the wind's easterly. (*Motley gives Percy the letter, who reads to himself.*) Its contents must needs be of consequence, for I assure you it comes from one of the greatest men in England. Well, sir, what says the letter?

Per. Listen.—"I have recognized you in spite of your disguise, and seized the opportunity to advise your exerting yourself solely to obtain Earl Percy's liberty. Heed not Angela: I have sure and easy means for procuring her escape; and before the clock strikes two, you may expect me with her at the fisherman's hut. Farewell, and rely upon Father Philip!"—Now, Gilbert, what say you? May the monk's fidelity be trusted?

Mot. His fidelity may, undoubtedly; but whether his success will equal his good intentions, is a point which time alone can decide. Should it not—

Per. Then with my faithful vassals will I storm the castle to-morrow. But where are my followers?

Allan. Fearing lest their numbers should excite suspicion, I left them concealed in yonder wood.

Per. Guide me to them. Edric, for this night I must request the shelter of your hut.

Edr. Willingly, my lord. But my cottage is so humble, your treatment so wretched—

Per. Silence, my good fellow! The hut where good-will resides is to me more welcome than a palace, and no food can be so sweet as that which is seasoned with smiles. You give me your best; a monarch could give no more, and it happens not often that men ever give so much. Now, farewell for an hour!—Allan, lead on!

[*Exeunt Percy, Allan, &c.*]

Mot. And in the meanwhile, friend Edric, I'll lend you a hand in preparing supper.

Edr. Truly, the task won't give you much trouble, for times have gone hard with me of late. Our present lord sees no company, gives no entertainments, and thus I sell no fish. Things went better while Earl Reginald lived.

Mot. What! you remember him?

Edr. Never shall I forget him, or his sweet lady. Why, I verily believe they possessed all the cardinal virtues. So pious, so generous, so mild! so kind to the poor—and so fond of fish!

Mot. Fond of fish! One of the cardinal virtues, of which I never heard before.

Edr. But these thoughts make me sad. Come, master Motley; your lord's supper still swims in the river:—if you'll help to catch it, why do so, and thank you heartily. Can you fish?

Mot. Can I? Who in this world cannot?—I'll assure you, friend Edric, there is no profession more universal than your's: we all spread our nets to catch something or other; and happy are they, in this world of disappointments, who throw out no nets save fishing ones!

SCENE II.—*The Castle Hall.*

Enter KENRIC.

Ken. Yonder he stalks, and seems buried in himself. Now then to attack him while my late service is still fresh upon his memory. Should he reject my petition positively, he shall have good cause to repent his ingratitude. Percy is in the neighbourhood; and that secret, known only to myself, will surely—But, silence!—Look where he comes!

Enter OSMOND.

Osm. It shall not be. Away with these foreboding terrors, which weigh down my heart!—I will forget the past, I will enjoy the present, and make those raptures again mine, which—Ah! no, no, no!—Conscience, that serpent, winds her folds round the cup of my bliss, and, ere my lips can reach it, her venom is mingled with the draught. And see where he walks, the chief object of my fears. He shall not be so long. His anxiety to

leave me, his mysterious threats—No, no; I will not live in fear.—Soft!—He advances.

Ken. So melancholy, my lord?

Osm. Aye, Kenric; and must be so 'till Angela is mine. Know that even now she extorted from me a promise, that 'till to-morrow I would leave her unmolested.

Ken. But 'till to-morrow?

Osm. But 'till to-morrow!—Oh! in that little space a lover's eye views myriads of dangers. Yet think not, good Kenric, that your late services are undervalued by me, or that I have forgotten those for which I have been long your debtor. When, bewildered by hatred of Reginald, and grief for Evelina's loss, my dagger was placed on the throat of their infant, your hand arrested the blow. Judge then how grateful I must feel when I behold in Angela, her mother's living counterpart.—Worthy Kenric, how can I repay your services?

Ken. These you may easily. But what, Earl Osmond, what can repay me for the sacrifice of my innocence? My hands were pure 'till you taught me to stain them with blood. You painted in strong colours the shame of servitude; you promised freedom, riches, independence. Let me then claim that independence so long promised, and seek for peace in some other climate, since memory forbids me to taste it in this.

Osm. Kenric, ere named, your wish was granted. In a far distant country a retreat is already prepared for you: there you may hush those elamours of conscience, which must reach me, I fear, e'en in the arms of Angela.

Ken. (*Affected.*) My lord!—Gratitude—Amazement—and I doubted—I suspected—Oh! my good lord, how have I wrong'd your kindness!

Osm. No more: I must not hear you. (*Aside.*) Shame! shame! that ever my soul should stoop to dissemble with my slave!

SAIB enters, and advances with apprehension.

Osm. How now?—Why this confusion?—Why do you tremble?—Speak!

Saib. My lord! The prisoner—

Osm. The prisoner?—Go on! go on!

Saib. (*Kneeling.*) Pardon, my lord, pardon; Our prisoner has escaped.

Osm. Villain! (*Wild with rage, he draws his dagger, and rushes upon Saib: Kenric holds his arm.*)

Ken. Hold! hold! What would you do?

Osm. (*Struggling.*) Unhand me, or by heaven—

Ken. Away! away!—Fly, fellow, and save yourself. [*Exit Saib.*] (*Releasing Osmond.*) Consider, my lord; haply 'twas not by his keeper's fault that—

Osm. (*Furiously.*) What is't to me by whose? Is not my rival fled? Soon will Northumberland's guards encircle my walls, and force from me—Yet that by heaven they shall not. No! Rather than resign her, my own hand shall give this castle a prey to flames; then, plunging with Angela into the blazing gulph, I'll leave these ruins to tell posterity how desperate was my love, and how dreadful my revenge! (*Going, he stops, and turns to Kenric.*)—And you, who dared to rush between me and my resentment—you, who could so well succeed in saving others—now look to yourself. [*Exit.*]

Ken. Ha! that look—that threat—Yet he seemed so kind, so grateful. He smiled too. Oh! there is ever danger when a villain smiles.

SAIB enters softly, looking round him with caution.

Saib. (*In a low voice.*) Hist!—Kenric!

Ken. How now? What brings—

Saib. Silence, and hear me. You have saved my life; nor will I be ungrateful. Look at this phial.

Ken. Ha! did the Earl—

Saib. Even so: a few drops of this liquor should to-night have flavoured your wine; you would never have drunk again. Mark me then. When I offer you a goblet at supper, drop it as by acci-

dent. For this night I give you life; use it to quit the castle; for no longer than 'till to-morrow dare I disobey our lord's commands. Farewell, and fly from Conway. You bear with you my thanks. [*Exit.*]

Ken. Can it be possible? Is not all this a dream? Villain! villain! Yes, yes, I must away. But tremble, traitor! A bolt, of which you little think, hangs over, and shall crush you. The keys are still in my possession. Angela shall be the partner of my flight. My prisoner too—Yet hold! May not resentment—may not Reginald's sixteen years' captivity—Oh! no! Angela shall be my advocate; and, grateful for her own, for her parent's life preserved, she can—she will obtain my pardon. Yet, should she fail, at least I shall drag down Osmond in my fall, and sweeten death's bitter cup with vengeance. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *The Cedar-room, with folding-doors in the middle, and a large antique bed: on one side is a portrait of a lady, on the other, that of a warrior armed. Both are at full length. After a pause, the female portrait falls back, and Father Philip, after looking in, advances cautiously.*

F. Phil. (*Closing the pannel.*) Thus far I have proceeded without danger, though not without difficulty. Yon narrow passage is by no means calculated for persons of my habit of body. By my holy dame! I begin to suspect that the fool is in the right. I certainly am growing corpulent. And now, how shall I employ myself? Sinner that I am, why did I forget my bottle of sack? The time will pass tediously 'till Angela comes; and to complete the business, yonder is the haunted oratory. What if the ghost should pop out on me? Blessed St. Bridget, there would be a tête-à-tête! Yet this is a foolish fear: 'tis yet scarce eight o'clock, and your ghosts always keep late hours; yet I don't like the idea of our being such near neighbours. If Alice says true, the apparition just now lives next door to me; but the lord forbid that we should ever be visiting acquaintance.

Osm. (*without.*) What, Aliee! Aliee! I say.

F. Phil. By St. David, 'tis the Earl! I'll away as fast as I can. (*Trying to open the door.*) I can't find the spring. Lord forgive me my sins! Where can I hide myself? Ha! the bed! 'Tis the very thing. (*Throws himself into the bed, and conceals himself under the clothes.*) Heaven grant that it maynt break down with me! for, oh! what a fall would be there, my countrymen! They come! (*The door is unlocked.*)

Enter OSMOND, ANGELA, and ALICE.

Osm. (*Entering.*) You have heard my will, lady. 'Till your hand is mine, you quit not this chamber.

Ang. If then it must be so, welcome, my eternal prison! Yet eternal it shall not be. My hero, my guardian-angel, is at liberty. Soon shall his horn make these hateful towers tremble, and your fetters be exchanged for the arms of Percy.

Osm. Beware, beware, Angela! Dare not before me—

Ang. Before you! Before the world! Is my attachment a disgrace? No! 'tis my pride; for its object is deserving. Long ere I knew him, Percy's fame was dear to me. While I still believed him the peasant Edwy, often, in his hearing, have I dwelt upon Northumberland's praise, and elid him that he spoke of our lord so coldly. Ah! little did I think that the man then seated beside me was he whom I envied for his power of doing good, whom I loved for exerting that power so largely. Judge then, Earl Osmond, on my arrival here, how strongly I must have felt the contrast. What peasant names you his benefactor? What beggar has been comforted by your bounty? What sick man preserved by your care? Your breast is unmoved by woe, your ear is deaf to complaint, your doors are barred against the poor and wretched.

Not so are the gates of Alnwick-castle; they are open as their owner's heart.

Osm. Insulting girl! This to my face?

Ang. Nay, never bend your brows. Shall I tremble, because you frown? Shall my eye sink, because anger flashes from your's? No; that would ill become the bride of Northumberland.

Osm. Amazement!—Can this be the gentle, timid Angela?

Ang. Wonder you that the worm should turn when you trample it so cruelly? Oh! wonder no more: ere he was torn from me, I clasped Percy to my breast, and my heart caught a spark of that fire which flames in his unceasingly.

Alice. Caught fire! lady?

Osm. Silence, old crone! I have heard you calmly, Angela; now then hear me. Twelve hours shall be allowed you to reflect upon your situation; 'till that period is elapsed, this chamber shall be your prison, and Alice, on whose fidelity I can depend, your sole attendant. This term expired, should you still reject my hand, force shall obtain for me what love denies. Speak not: I will hear nothing. I swear that to-morrow sees you mine, or undone; and skies rain curses on me if I keep not my oath! Mark that, proud girl! mark it, and tremble.

[Exit.

F. Phil. (From the bed.) Heaven be praised! he's gone.

Ang. Tremble, did he say? Alas! how quickly is my boasted courage vanished! Yet I will not despair; there is a power in heaven, there is a Percy on earth; on them will I rely to save me.

Alice. The first may, lady; but as to the second, he'll be of no use, depend on't. Now might I advise, you'd accept my lord's offer. What matters it whether the man's name be Osmond or Percy? An earl's an earl after all: and though one may be something richer than t'other—

Ang. Oh! silence, Alice; nor aid my tyrant's designs: rather instruct me how to counteract them; assist me to escape.

Alice. I help you to escape! Not for the best gown in your ladyship's wardrobe. I tremble at the very idea of my lord's rage; and, besides, had I the will, I've not the power. Kenric keeps the keys; we could not possibly quit the castle without his knowledge; and if the Earl threatens to use force with you—Oh gemini! what would he use with me, lady?

Ang. Threatens, Alice! I despise his threats! Ere it pillows Osmond's head, will I plunge this poniard in my bosom.

Alice. Holy fathers! A dagger!

Ang. Even now, as I wandered through the armoury, my eye was attracted by its glittering handle. Look, Alice; it bears Osmond's name; and the point—

Alice. Is rusty with blood! Take it away, lady, take it away; I never see blood without fainting!

Ang. (Putting up the dagger.) This weapon may render me good service.—But, ah! what service has it rendered Osmond? Haply, 'twas this very poniard which drank his brother's blood—or which pierced the fair breast of Evelina! Said you not, Alice, that this was her portrait?

Alice. I did, lady; and the likeness was counted excellent.

Ang. How fair! how heavenly fair!

Alice. (Having locked the folding doors.) Ah! 'twas a sad day for me, when I heard of the dear lady's loss. Look at the bed, lady; that very bed washer's. How often have I seen her sleeping in that bed; and, oh! how like an angel she looked when sleeping! I remember, that just after Earl Reginald—Oh! Lord! didn't somebody shake the curtain?

Ang. Absurd! It was the wind.

Alice. I declare it made me tremble. Well, as I was saying, I remember, just after Earl Reginald

had set out for the Scottish wars, going into her room one morning, and hearing her sob most bitterly: so advancing to the bed-side, as it might be thus—"My lady!" says I, with a low eurtsey, "Isn't your ladyship well?" So, with that, she raised her head slowly above the quilt, and, giving me a mournful look—(Here, unseen by Angela, who is contemplating Reginald's portrait, Father Philip lifts up his head, and gives a deep groan.)

Alice. Jesu Maria! the devil! the devil! [Exit.

Ang. (Turning round.) How now? (Father Philip rising from the bed, it breaks under him, and he rolls at Angela's feet.) Good heavens! (Attempting to pass him, he detains her by her robe.)

F. Phil. Stay, daughter, stay! If you run, I can never overtake you.

Ang. Amazement! Father Philip!

F. Phil. The very same, and at present the best friend that you have in the world. Daughter, I came to save you.

Ang. To save me? Speak! Proceed!

F. Phil. Observe this picture; it conceals a spring, whose secret is unknown to all in the castle, except myself. Upon touching it, the pannel slides back, and a winding passage opens into the marble hall. Thence we must proceed to the vaulted vestibule; a door is there concealed, similar to this; and, after threading the mazes of a subterranean labyrinth, we shall find ourselves in safety on the outside of the castle walls.

Ang. Oh! worthy, worthy father! Quick! let us hasten; let us not lose one moment.

F. Phil. Hold! hold! Not so fast. You forget that between the hall and vestibule we must traverse many chambers much frequented at this early hour. Wait 'till the castle's inhabitants are asleep. Expect me, without fail, at one; keep up your spirits, and doubt not of success. Now then, I must away, lest the Earl should perceive my absence.

Ang. Stay yet one moment. Tell me, does Percy—

F. Phil. I have apprised him, that this night will restore you to liberty, and he expects you at the fisherman's cottage. Now, then, farewell, fair daughter. [Exit F. Phil. through the sliding pannel.

Ang. Good friar, till one, farewell! Till that hour arrive, will I kneel at the feet of yonder saint, there tell my beads, and pray for morning. (Soft music, as the scene comes down very slowly.)

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—The Castle-Hall: the lamps are lighted.

Enter FATHER PHILIP.

F. Phil. 'Tis near midnight, and the Earl is already retired to rest. What if I ventured now to the lady's chamber? Hark! I hear the sound of footsteps.

Enter ALICE.

F. Phil. How, Alice! is it you?

Alice. So! So! Have I found you at last, Father? I have been in search of you these four hours! Oh! I've been so frightened since I saw you, that I wonder I keep my senses!

F. Phil. So do I; for I'm sure they're not worth the trouble. And, pray, what has alarmed you thus? I warrant you've taken an old cloak pinned against the wall for a spectre, or discovered the devil in the shape of a tabby cat.

Alice. (Looking round in terror.) For the love of heaven, Father, don't name the devil! or, if you must speak of him, pray mention the good gentleman with proper politeness. I'm sure, for my own part, I had always a great respect for him, and if he hears me, I dare say he'll own as much; for he certainly haunts this castle in the form of my late lady.

F. Phil. Form of a fiddlestick!—Don't tell me of your—

Alice. Father, on the word of a virgin, I saw him this very evening in lady Angela's bed.

F. Phil. In lady Angela's? On my conscience, the devil has an excellent taste. But, Alice! Alice! how dare you trot about the house at this time of night, propagating such abominable falsehoods? One comfort is, that nobody will believe you. Lady Angela's virtue is too well known, and I'm persuaded she wouldn't suffer the devil to put a single claw into her bed for the universe.

Alice. How you run on! Lord bless me, she wasn't in bed herself.

F. Phil. Oh! Was she not?

Alice. No, to be sure; but you shall hear how it happened. We were in the cedar-room together, and while we were talking of this and that, lady Angela suddenly gave a great scream. I looked round, and what should I see but a tall figure, all in white, extended upon the bed! At the same time, I heard a voice, which I knew to be the Countess Evelina's, pronounce in a hollow tone—"Alice! Alice! Alice!" three times. You may be certain that I was frightened enough. I instantly took to my heels; and just as I got outside of the door, I heard a loud clap of thunder.

F. Phil. Well done, Alice! A very good story, upon my word. It has but one fault—'tis not true.

Alice. Ods my life! Father, how can you tell anything about it? Sure I should know best; for I was there, and you were not. I repeat it—I heard the voice as plain as I hear your's. Do you think I've no cars?

F. Phil. Oh! far from it: I think you've uncommonly good ones; for you not only hear what has been said, but what has not. As to this wonderful story of your's, Alice, I don't believe one word of it: I'll be sworn that the voice was no more like your lady's than like mine; and that the devil was no more in the bed than I was. Therefore, take my advice, set your heart at rest, and go quietly to your chamber, as I am now going to mine. Good night! [*Exit.*]

Alice. There, he's gone. Dear heart! Dear heart! what shall I do now? 'Tis past twelve o'clock, and stay by myself I dare not. I'll e'en wake the laundry-maid, make her sit up in my room all night; and 'tis hard if two women aren't a match for the best devil in christendom. [*Exit.*]

Enter SAIB and HASSAN.

Saib. The Earl then has forgiven me! A moment longer and his pardon would have come too late. Had not Kenric held his hand, by this time I should be at supper with St. Peter.

Has. Your folly well deserved such a reward. Knowing the Earl's hasty nature, you should have shunned him 'till the first storm of passion was past, and circumstances had again made your ministry needful. Anger then would have armed his hand in vain; for interest, the white man's god, would have blunted the point of his dagger.

Saib. I trusted that his gratitude for my past services—

Has. European gratitude! Seek constancy in the winds; fire in ice; darkness in the blaze of sunshine! But seek not gratitude in the breast of an European.

Saib. Then, why so attached to Osmond? For what do you value him?

Has. Not for his virtues, but for his vices, Saib. Can there for me be a greater cause to love him? Am I not branded with scorn? Am I not marked out for dishonour? Was I not free, and am I not a slave? Was I not once beloved, and am I not now despis'd? What man, did I tender my service, would accept the negro's friendship? What woman, did I talk of affection, would not turn from the negro with disgust? Yet, in my own dear land, my friendship was courted, my love was returned. I had parents, children, wife!—Bitter thought! In one moment all were lost to me! Can I remember this, and not hate these white men! Can I think how cruelly they have wronged me, and not rejoice when

I see them suffer? Attached to Osmond, say you? Saib, I hate him. Yet viewing him as an avenging fiend, sent hither to torment his fellows, it glads me that he fills his office so well. Oh! 'tis a thought which I would not barter for empires, to know that in this world he makes others suffer, and will suffer himself for their tortures in the next.

Saib. But say you be one of those whom he causes to suffer, how then? Hassan, I will sleep no more in the lion's den. My resolve is taken: I will away from the castle, and seek in some other service that security—

Osm. (*Within.*) What—ho! Help! Lights there! Lights!

Has. Hark! Surely 'twas the Earl.

OSMOND rushes in wildly.

Osm. Save me! Save me! They are at hand! Oh! let them not enter! (*Sinks into the arms of Saib.*)

Saib. What can this mean? See how his eyes roll! how violently he trembles!

Has. Speak, my lord. Do you not know us?

Osm. (*Recovering himself.*) Ha! Whose voice? Hassan's? And Saib too here? Oh! was it then but a dream! Did I not hear those dreadful, those damning words? Still, still they ring in my ears. Hassan! Hassan! Death must be bliss, in flames or on the rack, compared to what I have this night suffered.

Has. Compose yourself, my lord. Can a mere dream unman you thus?

Osm. A mere dream, say'st thou? Hassan, 'twas a dream of such horror, did such dreams haunt my bitterest foe, I should wish him no severer punishment. Mark you not, how the ague of fear still makes my limbs tremble? Roll not my eyes as if still gazing on the spectre? Are not my lips convulsed, as were they yet pressed by the kiss of corruption? Oh! 'twas a sight that might have bleached joy's rosy cheek for ever, and strewed the snows of age upon youth's auburn ringlets! Hassan, thou saidst 'twas but a dream—I was deceived by fancy. Hassan, thou said'st true; there is not, there cannot be a world to come.

Has. My lord!—

Osm. Answer me not. Let me not hear the damning truth. Tell me not, that flames await me! that for moments of bliss, I must endure long ages of torture. Say, that with my body must perish my soul. For, oh! should my fearful dream be prophetic——Hark, fellows! Instruments of my guilt, listen to my punishment. Methought I wandered through the low browed caverns, where repose the reliques of my ancestors. My eye dwelt with awe on their tombs, with disgust on mortality's surrounding emblems. Suddenly, a female form glided along the vault: it was Angela! She smiled upon me, and beckoned me to advance. I flew towards her; my arms were already unclosed to clasp her—when suddenly her figure changed, her face grew pale, a stream of blood gushed from her bosom—Hassan, 'twas Evelina!

Saib and Has. Evelina!

Osm. Such as when she sank at my feet expiring, while my hand grasped the dagger still crimsoned with her blood. "We meet again this night!" murmured her hollow voice. "Now rush to my arms; but first see what you have made me. Embrace me, my bridegroom. We must never part again!" While speaking, her form withered away: the flesh fell from her bones; her eyes burst from their sockets: a skeleton, loathsome and meagre, clasped me in her mouldering arms!

Saib. Most horrible!

Osm. Her infected breath was mingled with mine; her rotting fingers pressed my hand, and my face was covered with her kisses. Oh! then, then how I trembled with disgust! And then blue dismal flames gleamed along the walls; the tombs were rent asunder; bands of fierce spectres rushed

round me in frantic dance; furiously they gnashed their teeth while they gazed upon me, and shrieked in loud yell—"Welcome, thou fratricide! Welcome, thou lost for ever!" Horror burst the bands of sleep; distracted, I flew hither: but my feelings—words are too weak, too powerless to express them.

Saib. My lord, my lord, this was no idle dream. 'Twas a celestial warning; 'twas your better angel that whispered—"Osmond, repent your former crimes; commit not new ones." Remember, that this night should Kenric—

Osm. Kenric?—Speak! Drank he the poison?

Saib. Obedient to your orders, I presented it at supper; but ere the cup reached his lips, his favourite dog sprang upon his arm, and the liquor fell to the ground untasted.

Osm. Praised be heaven! Then my soul is lighter by a crime. Kenric shall live, good Saib. What, though he quit me, and betray my secrets;—proofs he cannot bring against me, and bare assertions will not be believed. At worst, should his tale be credited, long ere Percy can wrest her from me, shall Angela be mine. Hassan, to your vigilance I leave the care of my beloved. Fly to me that instant, should any unbidden footstep approach yon chamber-door. I'll to my couch again. Follow me, Saib, and watch me while I sleep. Then, if you see my limbs convulsed, my teeth clenched, my hair bristling, and cold dews trembling on my brow; seize me! rouse me! snatch me from my bed! I must not dream again. Oh! how I hate thee, sleep! Friend of virtue, oh! how I dread thy coming! *[Exit with Saib.]*

Has. Yes, thou art sweet, vengeance. Oh! how it joys me when the white man suffers! Yet weak are his pangs, compared to those I felt when torn from thy shores, O native Africa! from thy bosom, my faithful Samba!—Ah! dost thou still exist, my wife? Has sorrow for my loss, traced thy smooth brow with wrinkles? My boy too,—whom on that morning when the man-hunters seized me, I left sleeping on thy bosom—say, lives he yet? does he ever speak of me? Does he ask, "Mother, describe to me my father; show me how the warrior looked!" Ha! has my bosom still room for thoughts so tender? Hence with them! Vengeance must possess it all. Oh! when I forget my wrongs, may I forget myself! When I forbear to hate these Christians, god of my fathers! may'st thou hate me! Ha! Whence that light? A man moves this way with a lamp! How cautiously he steals along! He must be watched. This friendly column will shield me from his regards. Silence! He comes. *(Retires.)*

Enter KENRIC, softly, with a lamp.

Ken. All is hushed! the castle seems buried in sleep. Now then to Angela! *[Exit.]*

Has. (Advancing.) It was Kenric! Still he moves onwards. Now he stops. 'Tis at the door of Angela's chamber. He unlocks it! He enters! Away then to the Earl: Christian, soon shall we meet again.

SCENE II.—*Angela's Apartment.*

ANGELA stands by the window, which is open, and through which the moon is seen.

Ang. Will it never arrive, this tedious lingering hour? Sure an age must have elapsed since the friar left me, and still the bell strikes not one. Hark! Surely I heard—some one unlocks the door! Oh! should it be the Earl! should he not retire ere the monk arrives! The door opens!—How! Kenric here!—Speak—what would you?

Enter KENRIC.

Ken. Softly, lady! If overheard, I am lost, and your fate is connected with mine—

Ang. What means this mystery? This midnight visit—

Ken. Is the visit of a friend, of a penitent!—Lady, I must away from the castle: the keys are

in my possession: I will make you the companion of my flight, and deliver you safe into the hands of Percy. But ere we depart, *(kneeling)* oh! tell me, lady, will you plead for me with one, who to me alone owes sixteen years of hard captivity?

Ang. Rise, Kenric: I understand you not. Of what captive do you speak?

Ken. Of one, who by me has been most injured, who to you will be most dear. Listen, lady, to my strange narration. I was brought up with Osmond, was the partner of his pleasures, the confidant of his cares. The latter sprang solely from his elder brother, whose birthright he coveted, whose superiority he envied. Yet his aversion burst not forth, till Evelina Neville, rejecting his hand, bestowed her's with her heart on Reginald. Then did Osmond's passion overleap all bounds. He resolved to assassinate his brother when returning from the Scottish wars, carry off the lady, and make himself master of her person by force. This scheme he imparted to me: he flattered, threatened, promised, and I yielded to his seduction.

Ang. Wretched man!

Ken. Condemn me not unheard. 'Tis true, that I followed Osmond to the scene of slaughter, but no blood that day inbrued my hand. It was the Earl, whose sword struck Reginald to the ground: it was the Earl, whose dagger was raised to complete his crime, when Evelina threw herself upon her husband's body, and received the weapon in her own.

Ang. Dreadful! dreadful!

Ken. Osmond's wrath became madness. He gave the word for slaughter, and Reginald's few attendants were butchered on the spot. Scarce could my prayers and arguments save from his wrath his infant niece, whose throat was already gored by his poniard. Angela, your's still wears that mark.

Ang. Mine? Almighty powers!

Ken. Lady, 'tis true. I concealed in Allan's cottage the heiress of Conway: there were you doomed to languish in obscurity; 'till, alarmed by the report of his spies that Percy loved you, he caused me to reclaim you from Allan, and resolved, by making you his wife, to give himself a lawful claim to these possessions.

Ang. The monster! Oh! good, good Kenric! and you knelt to me for pardon? You to whom I owe my life! You to whom—

Ken. Hold! oh! hold! Lady, how little do I deserve your thanks! Oh! listen! listen!—I was the last to quit the bloody spot: sadly was I retiring, when a faint groan struck my ear. I sprang from my horse; I placed my hand on Reginald's heart; it beat beneath the pressure. *(Here Osmoud appears at the door, motions to Saib to retire, and advances himself unobserved.)*

Ang. It beat! It beat! Cruel!—and your dagger—

Ken. Oh! that would have been mercy! No, lady. It struck me, how strong would be my hold over Osmond, while his brother was in my power; and this reflection determined me to preserve him. Having plunged the other bodies in the Conway's flood, I placed the bleeding Earl's on my horse before me, and conveyed him, still insensible, to a retreat, to all, except myself, a secret. There I tended his wounds carefully, and succeeded in preserving his life.—Lady, Reginald still exists.—*(Here Osmoud, with a furious look, draws his dagger, and motions to stab Kenric. A moment's reflection makes him stay his hand, and he returns the weapon into the sheath.)*

Ang. Still exists, say you? My father still exists?

Ken. He does, if a life so wretched can be termed existence. While his swoon lasted, I chained him to his dungeon wall; and no sooner were his wounds healed, than I entered his prison

no more. Lady, near sixteen years have passed, since the human voice struck the ear of Reginald.

Ang. Alas! alas!

Ken. But the hour of his release draws near: then follow me in silence; I will guide you to Reginald's dungeon: this key unlocks the castle gates; and ere the cock crows, safe in the arms of Percy—(*Here his eye falls upon Osmond, who has advanced between him and Angela. She shrieks, and sinks into a chair.*) Horror!—the Earl!—Undone for ever!

Osm. Miscreant!—Within there!

Enter SAIB, HASSAN, and MULEY.

Osm. Hence with that traitor! Confine him in the western tower!

Ang. (*Starting wildly from her seat.*) Yet speak once more, Kenric! Where is my father? What place conceals him?

Osm. Let him not speak! Away with him! (*Kenric is forced off by the Africans.*)

Osm. (*Paces the stage with a furious air, while Angela eyes him with terror; at length he stops, and addresses her.*) Nay, stifle not your curses! Why should your tongue be silent when your eye speaks? Is there not written on every feature "Vengeance on the assassin! Justice on my mother's murderer?"—But mark me, Angela! Compared to that which soon must be thine, these titles are sweet and lovely. Know'st thou the word parricide, Angela? Know'st thou their pangs who shed the blood of a parent?—Those pangs must be thine to-morrow. This long-concealed captive, this new-found father—

Ang. Your brother, Osmond! your brother!—Surely you cannot, will not—

Osm. Still doubt you, that I both can, and will? Remember Kenric's tale! Remember, though the first blow failed, the second will strike deeper! But from whom must Reginald receive that second? Not from his rival brother; not from his inveterate foe; from his daughter, his unfeeling daughter! 'Tis she, who, refusing me her hand, will place a dagger in mine; 'tis she, whose voice declaring that she hates me, will bid me plunge that dagger in her father's heart.

Ang. Man! man! drive me not mad!

Osm. Then fancy that he lies in some damp, solitary dungeon, writhing in death's agonies, his limbs distorted, his eye-strings breaking, his soul burthened with crimes, his last words curses on his unnatural child, who could have saved him, but would not!

Ang. Horrible! horrible!

Osm. Must Reginald die, or will Angela be mine?

Ang. Thine? She will perish first.

Osm. You have pronounced his sentence, and his blood be on your head. Farewell!

Ang. (*Detaining him, and throwing herself on her knees.*) Hold! hold! Look with pity on a creature whom your cruelty has bowed to the earth, whose heart you have almost broken, whose brain you have almost turned! Mercy, Osmond! Oh! mercy! mercy!

Osm. Lovely, lovely suppliant! Why owe to cold consent what force may this instant give me? It shall be so; and thus—(*Attempting to clasp her in his arms, she starts from the ground suddenly, and draws her dagger with a distracted look.*)

Ang. Away! approach me not! dare not to touch me, or this poniard—

Osm. Foolish girl! let me but say the word, and thou art disarmed that moment. (*Attempting to seize it, his eyes rest upon the hilt, and he starts back with horror.*) By hell! the very poniard which—

Ang. (*In an exulting tone.*) Ha! hast thou found me, villain? Villain! dost thou know this weapon? Know'st thou whose blood inerusts the point? Murderer! it flowed from the bosom of my mother!

Osm. Within, there! help! (*Hassan and Alaric enter.*) Oh! God in heaven! (*He falls*

senseless into their arms, and they convey him from the chamber; the door is locked after them.)

Ang. He faints! Long may the villain wear thy chains, oblivion! Long be it ere he wakes to commit new crimes! (*She remains for some moments prostrate on the ground in silent sorrow. The castle bell strikes "one!"*) Hark! the bell! 'Tis the time which the monk appointed. He will not tarry: Ha! what was that? Methought the sound of music floated by me! It seemed as some one had struck the guitar. I must have been deceived; it was but fancy. (*A plaintive voice sings within, accompanied by a guitar.*)

"Lullaby!—Lullaby!—Hush thee, my dear,

"Thy father is coming, and soon will be here!"

Ang. Heavens! the very words which Alice—(*The folding doors unclose, and the oratory is seen illuminated. In its centre, stands a tall female figure, her white and flowing garments spotted with blood; her veil is thrown back, and discovers a pale and melancholy countenance; her eyes are lifted upwards, her arms extended towards heaven, and a large wound appears upon her bosom. Angela sinks upon her knees, with her eyes rivetted upon the figure, which, for some moments, remains motionless. At length, the spectre advances slowly to a soft and plaintive strain; she stops opposite Reginald's picture, and gazes upon it in silence. She then turns, approaches Angela, seems to invoke a blessing upon her, points to the picture, and retires to the oratory. The music ceases. Angela rises with a wild look, and follows the vision, extending her arms towards it. The spectre waves her hand, as bidding her farewell. Instantly the organ's swell is heard; a full chorus of female voices chaunts "Jubilate!" a blaze of light flashes through the oratory, and the folding doors close with a loud noise.*)

ACT V.

SCENE I.—*View of Cowway Castle by moonlight.*

Enter ALLAN and MOTLEY.

Allan. But should the friar's plot have failed—

Mot. Failed, and a priest and a petticoat concerned in it! Oh, no! a plot composed of such good ingredients cannot but succeed. Ugh! would I were again seated by the fisher's hearth. The wind blows cruel sharp and bitter.

Allan. For shame, Gilbert, is not my lord equally exposed to its severity?

Mot. Oh! the flame in his bosom keeps him warm, and in a cold night love wraps one up better than a blanket; but that not being my situation, the present object of my desires is a blazing wood fire, and Venus would look to me less lovely than a smoking sack-posset. Oh! when I was in love I managed matters much better. I always paid my addresses by the fire-side, and contrived to urge my soft suit just at dinner-time; then, how I filled my fair one's ears with fine speeches, while she filled my trencher with roast beef! then, what figures and tropes came out of my month, and what dainties and tid-bits went in! 'Twould have done your heart good to have heard me talk, and seen me eat; and you'd have found it no easy matter to decide whether I'd most wit or appetite.

Allan. And who was the object of this voracious passion?

Mot. A person well calculated to charm both my heart and my stomach; it was a lady of great merit, who did Earl Percy's father the honour to superintend his culinary concerns. I was scarce fifteen when she kindled a flame in my heart while lighting the kitchen fire; from that moment I thought on nothing but her. My mornings were passed in composing poems on her beauty; my evenings in reciting them in her ear; for nature had equally denied the fair creature and myself the faculty of reading and writing.

Allan. You were successful, I hope.

Mot. Why, at length, she consented to be mine;

when, oh! cruel fortune! taking one night a drop too much—poor dear creature! she never got the better of it—I wept her loss, and composed an elegy upon it.—It began thus:

“Baked be the pies to coals,
“Burn, roast meat, burn;
“Boil o’er, ye pots—ye spits, forget to turn,
“Cind’relia’s death’—

Enter EARL PERCY, over the bridge.

Allan. Here comes the Earl.

Mot. In truth, my lord, you venture too near the castle; should you fall into Osmond’s power a second time, your next jump may be into a better world—

Per. Oh, there’s no danger, Gilbert; my followers are not far off, and will join me at a moment’s warning; then fear not for me.

Mot. With all my heart; but permit me to fear for myself. We are now within bow-shot of the castle; the archers may think proper to amuse us with a proof of their skill; and were I to feel an arrow quivering in my gizzard, probably I should be much more surprised than pleased. Good, my lord, let us back to the fisherman’s hut.

Per. Your advice may be wise, Gilbert, but I cannot follow it. See you nothing near yonder tower?

Mot. Yes, certainly. Two persons advance towards us: yet they cannot be our friends, for I see neither the lady’s petticoat nor the monk’s paunch.

Per. Still they approach, though slowly: one leans on his companion, and seems to move with pain. Let us retire and observe them.

Mot. Away, sir; I’m at your heels. [*They retire.*]

Enter SAIB conducting KENRIC.

Saib. Nay, yet hold up a while. Now we are near the fisher’s cottage.

Ken. Good Saib, I needs must stop. Enfeebled by Osmond’s tortures, my limbs refuse to bear me further. Here lay me down: then fly to Percy, guide him to the dungeon; and, ere ’tis too late, bid him save the father of Angela.

Per. (To Motley.) Hark! did you hear?

Saib. Yet to leave you thus alone!—

Ken. Oh! heed not me. Think that on these few moments depends our safety, Angela’s freedom, Reginald’s life. You have the master-key. Fly then; oh! fly to Percy! (*Percy and Motley come forward to Kenric and Saib.*)

Per. Said he not Reginald? Speak again, stranger. What of Reginald?

Saib. Ha! look up, Kenric! ’Tis Percy’s self!

Per. and Mot. How! Kenric!

Ken. (Sinking at Percy’s feet.) Yes, the guilty, penitent Kenric! Oh, surely ’twas heaven sent you hither. Know, Earl Percy, that Reginald lives, that Angela is his daughter!

Per. Amazement! And is this known to Osmond?

Ken. Two hours have scarcely passed since he surprised the secret. Tortures compelled me to avow where Reginald was hidden, and he now is in his brother’s power. Fly then to his aid! Alas! perhaps at this moment his destruction is completed! Perhaps even now Osmond’s dagger—

Per. Within there! Allan! Harold! Quick, Gilbert, sound your horn. (*Motley sounds it: it is echoed.*)

Enter ALLAN, EDRIC, HAROLD, and soldiers.

Per. Friends, may I depend on your support?

Har. While we breathe, all will stand by you.

Soldiers. All! All!

Per. Follow me then. Away!

Ken. Yet stay one moment. Percy, to this grateful friend have I confided a master-key, which will instantly admit you to the castle, and have described to him the retreat of Reginald. Be he your guide, and hasten—Oh! that pang! (*He faints; Allan and Edric support him.*)

Per. Look to him. He sinks! Bear him to your hut, Edric, and there tend his hurts. (*To*

Saib.) Now on, good fellow, and swiftly! Osmond, despair! I come! [*Exit with Saib, Motley, Harold, and soldiers, over the bridge, while Allan and Edric convey away Kenric still fainting.*]

SCENE II.—A vaulted Chamber.

Enter FATHER PHILIP, with a basket on his arm and a torch, conducting ANGELA.

F. Phil. Thanks to St. Francis, we have as yet passed unobserved! Surely, of all travelling companions, fear is the least agreeable: I could not be more fatigued, had I run twenty miles without stopping.

Ang. Why this delay? Good Father, let us proceed.

F. Phil. Ere I can go further, lady, I must needs stop to take breath, and refresh my spirits with a taste of this cordial. (*Taking a bottle from the basket.*)

Ang. Oh! not now. Wait ’till we are safe under Percy’s protection, and then drink as you list. But not now, Father; in pity, not now.

F. Phil. Well, well, be calm, daughter. Oh! these women! these women! they mind no one’s comfort but their own. Now, where is the door?

Ang. How tedious seems every moment which I pass within these hated walls! Ha! yonder comes a light!

F. Phil. So, so, I’ve found it at last. (*Touching a spring, a secret door flies open.*)

Ang. It moves this way! By all my fears, ’tis Osmond! In, father, in! Away, for heaven’s sake! [*Exeunt, closing the door after them.*]

Enter OSMOND and HASSAN, with a torch.

Osm. (After a pause of gloomy meditation.) Is all still within the castle?

Has. As the silence of the grave.

Osm. Where are your fellows?

Has. Saib guards the traitor Kenric: Muley and Alaric are buried in sleep.

Osm. Their hands have been stained with blood, and yet can they sleep? Call your companions hither. (*Hassan offers to leave the torch.*) Away with the light! its beams are hateful. [*Exit Hassan.*] Yes; this is the place. If Kenric said true, for sixteen years have the vaults beneath me rung with my brother’s groans. I dread to uncloset the door. How shall I sustain the beams of his eye, when they rest on Evelina’s murderer? Ha! at that name my expiring hate revives! Reginald! Reginald! for thee was I sacrificed! Oh! when it strikes a second blow, my poniard shall strike surer!

Enter HASSAN, MULEY, and ALARIC, with Torches. The Africans (together.) My lord! my lord!

Osm. Now, why this haste?

Has. I tremble to inform you, that Saib has fled the castle. A master-key, which he found upon Kenric, and of which he kept possession, has enabled him to escape.

Osm. Saib too, gone? All are false! All forsake me!

Has. Yet more, my lord; he has made his prisoner the companion of his flight.

Osm. (Starting.) How! Kenric escaped!

Ala. ’Tis but too certain; doubtless he has fled to Percy.

Osm. To Percy?—Ha! then I must be speedy: my fate hangs on a thread. Friends, I have ever found ye faithful; mark me now. (*Opening the private door.*) Of these two passages, the left conducts to a long chain of dungeons: in one of these my brother still languishes. Once already have you seen him bleeding beneath my sword; but he yet exists. My fortune, my love, nay, my life, are at stake!—Need I say more? (*Each half unsheathes his sword.*)—That gesture speaks me understood. On then before; I follow you. (*The Africans pass through the private door; Osmond is advancing towards it, when he suddenly starts back.*)

Ha! Why roll these seas of blood before me? Whose mangled corse do they bear to my feet?—Fratricide! Oh! 'tis a dreadful name! Yet how preserve myself and Reginald? It cannot be. We must not breathe the same atmosphere. Fate, thy hand urges me. Fate, thy voice prompts me. Thou hast spoken; I obey. (*He follows the Africans; the door is closed after him.*)

SCENE III.—*A gloomy subterraneous Dungeon, wide and lofty: the upper part of it has, in several places, fallen in, and left large chasms. On one side, are various passages leading to other caverns; on the other, is an iron door with steps leading to it, and a wicket in the middle.* REGINALD, pale and emaciated, in coarse garments, his hair hanging wildly about his face, and a chain bound round his body, lies sleeping upon a bed of straw. A lamp, a small basket, and a pitcher, are placed near him. After a few moments he awakes, and extends his arms.

Reg. My child! My Evelina! Oh! fly me not, lovely forms! They are gone, and once more I live to misery. Thou wert kind to me, Sleep! Even now, methought, I sat in my castle-hall: a maid, lovely as the queen of fairies, hung on my knee, and hailed me by that sweet name, "Father!" Yes, I was happy. Yet frown not on me therefore, Darkness! I am thine again, my gloomy bride. Be not incensed, Despair, that I left thee for a moment. I have passed with thee sixteen years. Ah! how many have I still to pass? Yet fly not my bosom quite, sweet Hope! Still speak to me of liberty, of light! Whisper, that once more I shall see the morn break; that again shall my fevered lips drink the pure gale of evening. God! thou knowest that I have borne my sufferings meekly: I have wept for myself, but never cursed my foes; I have sorrowed for thy anger, but never murmured at thy will. Patient have I been; oh! then reward me; let me once again press my daughter in my arms; let me, for one instant, feel again that I clasp to my heart a being who loves me. Speed thou to heaven, prayer of a captive! (*He sinks upon a stone, with his hands clasped, and his eyes bent stedfastly upon the flame of the lamp.*)

ANGELA and FATHER PHILIP are seen through the chasms above, passing slowly.

Ang. Be cautious, Father. Feel you not how the ground trembles beneath us?

F. Phil. Perfectly well; and would give my best breviary to find myself once more on terra-firma. But the outlet cannot be far off: let us proceed.

Ang. Look down upon us, blessed angels! Aid us! Protect us!

F. Phil. Amen! fair daughter. (*They disappear.*)

Reg. (*After a pause.*) How wastes my lamp? The hour of Kenric's visit must long be past, and still he comes not. How, if death's hand hath struck him suddenly! My existence unknown. Away from my fancy, dreadful idea! (*Rising, and taking the lamp.*) The breaking of my chain permits me to wander at large through the wide precincts of my prison. Haply the late storm, whose pealing thunders were heard e'en in this abyss, may have rent some friendly chasm: haply some nook yet unexplored. Ah! no, no! my hopes are vain, my search will be fruitless. Despair in these dungeons reigns despotic; she mocks my complaints, rejects my prayers; and, when I sue for freedom, bids me seek it in the grave! Death! oh, death! how welcome wilt thou be to me. [*Exit.*] (*The noise is heard of a heavy bar falling; the door opens.*)

Enter FATHER PHILIP and ANGELA.

F. Phil. How's this? A door!

Ang. It was barred on the outside.

F. Phil. That we'll forgive, as it wasn't bolted on the in. But I don't recollect—surely I've not—

Ang. What's the matter?

F. Phil. By my faith, daughter, I suspect that I've missed my way.

Ang. Heaven forbid!

F. Phil. Nay, if 'tis so, I shan't be the first man who of two ways has preferred the wrong.

Ang. Provoking! And did I not tell you to choose the right-hand passage?

F. Phil. Truly, did you: and that was the very thing which made me choose the left. Whenever I am in doubt myself, I generally ask a woman's advice. When she's of one way of thinking, I've always found that reason's on the other. In this instance, perhaps, I have been mistaken: but wait here for one moment, and the fact shall be ascertained. [*Exit.*]

Ang. How thick and infectious is the air of this cavern! yet, perhaps, for sixteen years has my poor father breathed none purer. Hark! steps are quick advancing! The friar comes, but why in such confusion?

Re-enter FATHER PHILIP, running.

F. Phil. Help! help! It follows me!

Ang. (*Detaining him.*) What alarms you? Speak!

F. Phil. His ghost! his ghost!—Let me go! let me go! let me go! (*Struggling to escape from Angela, he falls and extinguishes the torch; then hastily rises, and rushes up the staircase, closing the door after him.*)

Ang. Father! Father! Stay, for heaven's sake!—He's gone. I cannot find the door.—Hark! 'Twas the clank of chains! A light too! It comes yet nearer! Save me, ye powers! What dreadful form! 'Tis here! I faint with terror! (*Sinks almost lifeless against the dungeon's side.*)

Re-enter REGINALD, with a lamp.

Reg. (*Placing his lamp upon a pile of stones.*) Why did Kenric enter my prison? Haply, when he heard not my groans at the dungeon door, he thought that my woes were relieved by death. Oh! when will that thought be verified? Thou art dead, and at rest, my wife! Safe in yon skies, no thought of me molests thy quiet. Yet sure I wrong thee! At the hour of death, thy spirit shall stand beside me, shall close mine eyes gently, and murmur, "Die, Reginald, and be at peace!"

Ang. Hark! heard I not—Pardon, good stranger—

Reg. (*Starting wildly from his seat.*) 'Tis she! She comes for me! Is the hour at hand, fair vision? Spirit of Evelina! lead on, I follow thee! (*He extends his arms towards her, staggers a few paces forwards, then sinks exhausted on the ground.*)

Ang. He faints! perhaps expires!—Still, still! See, he revives!

Reg. 'Tis gone! Once more the sport of my bewildered brain. (*Starting up.*) Powers of bliss! Look, where it moves again! Oh! say, what art thou? If Evelina, speak, oh speak!

Ang. Ha! Named he not Evelina? That look! This dungeon too! The emotions which his voice—It is, it must be! Father! Oh! Father! Father! (*Falling upon his bosom.*)

Reg. Said you? Meant you? My daughter—my infant, whom I left—Oh! yes, it must be true! My heart, which springs towards you, acknowledges my child. (*Embracing her.*) But say, how gained you entrance? Has Osmond—

Ang. Oh! that name recalls my terrors. Alas! you see in me a fugitive from his violence. Guided by a friendly monk, whom your approach has frightened from me, I was endeavouring to escape: we missed our way, and chance guided us to this dungeon. But this is not a time for explanation. Answer me. Know you the subterraneous passages belonging to this castle?

Reg. Whose entrance is without the walls? I do.

Ang. Then we may yet be saved! Father, we must fly this moment. Percy, the pride of our English youth, waits for me at the Conway's side.

Come then, oh! come. Stay not one moment longer.
(*As she approaches the door, lights appear above.*)

Reg. Look, look, my child! The beams of distant torches flash through the gloom.

Osm. (*Above.*) Hassan, guard you the door. Follow me, my friends. (*The lights disappear.*)

Ang. Osmond's voice! Undone! Undone! Oh! my father! he comes to seek you, perhaps to—

Reg. Hark! they come! The gloom of yonder cavern may awhile conceal you: fly to it: hide yourself: stir not, I charge you.

Ang. What, leave you? Oh! no, no!

Reg. Dearest, I entreat, I conjure you, fly! Fear not for me!

Ang. Father! Oh! father!

Reg. Farewell! perhaps for ever! (*He forces Angela into the cavern, then returns hastily, and throws himself on the bed of straw.*) Now, then, to hear my doom.

Enter OSMOND, followed by MULEY and ALARIC, with torches.

Osm. The door unbarred! Softly; my fears were false! Lo! where stretched on the ground, a stone his pillow, he tastes that repose which flies from my bed of down. Wake, Reginald, and arise!

Reg. You here, Osmond? What brings you to this scene of sorrow? Alas! Hope flies while I gaze upon your frowning eye. Have I read its language aright, Osmond?

Osm. Aright, if you have read my hatred.

Reg. Have I deserved that hate? See, my brother, the once proud Reginald lies at your feet; for his pride has been humbled by suffering. Hear him adjure you by her ashes, within whose bosom we both have lain, not to stain your hands with the blood of your brother. Kenric has told me that my daughter lives. Restore me to her arms; permit us in obscurity to pass our days together. Then shall my last sigh implore upon your head heaven's forgiveness and Evelina's.

Osm. He melts me in my own despite. It shall be so. (*Aside.*) Rise, Reginald, and hear me. You mentioned, even now, your daughter: know, she is in my power; know, also, that I love her.

Reg. How!

Osm. She rejects my offers. Your authority can oblige her to accept them. Swear to use it, and this instant will I lead you to her arms. Say, will you give the demanded oath?

Reg. I cannot dissemble: Osmond, I never will.

Osm. How!—Reflect that your life—

Reg. Would be valueless, if purchased by my daughter's tears; would be loathsome if embittered by my daughter's misery. Osmond, I will not take the oath.

Osm. (*Almost choked with passion.*) 'Tis enough! (*To the Africans.*) You know your duty. Drag him to yonder cavern. Let me not see him die.

Reg. (*Holding by a fragment of the wall, from which the Africans strive to force him.*) Brother, for pity's sake! for your soul's happiness!

Osm. Obey me, slaves! Away!

ANGELA rushes in wildly, from the cavern.

Ang. Hold off! Hurt him not! He is my father!

Osm. Angela here!

Reg. Daughter, what means—

Ang. (*Embracing him.*) You shall live, father! I will sacrifice all to preserve you. Osmond, release my father, and solemnly I swear—

Reg. Hold, girl, and first hear me! (*Kneeling.*) God of nature, to thee I call! If e'er on Osmond's bosom a child of mine rest; if e'er she call him husband, who pierced her hapless mother's heart, that moment shall a wound, by my own hand inflicted—

Ang. Hold! Oh! hold—end not your oath!

Osm. I burn with rage!

Ang. I swear!

Reg. Be repaid by this embrace.

Osm. Be it your last! Tear them asunder! Ha! what noise?

Enter HASSAN, hastily.

Has. My lord, all is lost! Percy has surprised the castle, and speeds this way.

Osm. Confusion! Then I must be sudden. Aid me, Hassan. (*Hassan and Osmond force Angela from her father, who suddenly disengages himself from Muley and Alaric.*)

Reg. Friends so near? Villains! at least you shall buy my life dearly. (*Suddenly seizing Hassan's sword.*)

Osm. (*Employed with Hassan in retaining Angela, while Reginald defends himself against Muley and Alaric.*) Down with him! Wrest the sword from him! (*Alaric is wounded and falls; Muley gives back; at the same time, Osmond's party appears above, pursued by Percy's.*) Hark! they come! Dastardly villains! Nay then, my own hand must—(*Drawing his sword, he rushes upon Reginald, who is disarmed, and beaten upon his knees; when, at the moment that Osmond lifts his arm to stab him, Evelina's ghost throws herself between them: Osmond starts back, and drops his sword.—Angela disengaging herself from Hassan, springs suddenly forwards, and plunges her dagger in Osmond's bosom, who falls with a loud groan, and faints. The ghost vanishes: Angela and Reginald rush into each other's arms.*)

Ang. Father, thou art mine again!

Enter PERCY, SAIB, HAROLD, &c. pursuing OSMOND's party. They all stop, on seeing him bleeding upon the ground.

Per. Hold, my brave friends! See where lies the object of our search.

Ang. Percy! dear Percy!

Per. (*Flying to her.*) Dearest Angela!

Ang. My friend, my guardian angel! Come, Percy, come; embrace my father. Father, embrace the protector of your child.

Per. Do I then behold Earl Reginald?

Reg. (*Embracing him.*) The same, brave Percy! Welcome to my heart! Live ever next it.

Ang. Oh, moment that o'erpays my sufferings! And yet—Percy, that wretched man—he perished by my hand! (*Osmond is conveyed away: servants enter with torches.*)

Per. But say, fair Angela, what have I to hope? Is my love approved by your noble father? Will he—

Reg. Percy, this is no time to talk of love. Let me hasten to my expiring brother, and soften with forgiveness the pangs of death.

Per. Can you forget your sufferings?

Reg. Ah! youth; has he had none? Oh! in his stately chambers, far greater must have been his pangs than mine in this gloomy dungeon; for what gave me comfort was his terror, what gave me hope was his despair.

And, oh, thou wretch! whom hopeless woes oppress,
Whose days no joys, whose nights no slumbers bless,

When pale Despair alarms thy phrensied eye,
Screams in thine ear, and bids thee heaven deny,
Court thou Religion! strive thy faith to save;
Bend thy fix'd glance on bliss beyond the grave;
Hush guilty murmurs! banish dark mistrust!
Think, there's a Power above, nor doubt that
Power is just!

